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Sen. Cropsey: Governor's veto on judges 'incredibly divisive move'

LANSING — The governor's veto today of bills that would have added new judges in Kent, Macomb and several northern Michigan counties pits state residents against each other for political gain, said Sen. Alan Cropsey, R-DeWitt.

"With these vetoes, she is politicizing the judiciary," said Cropsey, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Appropriations subcommittee overseeing the state judiciary's budget. "She's pitting the people in outstate Michigan against the people of Wayne County. This is an incredibly divisive move and all the people of Michigan deserve better."

The bills would have added additional circuit and district court judgeships in Clare, Gladwin, Kent, Mecosta, Macomb and Osceola counties, as recommended by the independent, nonpartisan State Court Administrative Office of the Michigan Supreme Court.

Instead the governor chose to play politics, vetoing the bills because Democrats want more judgeships in Wayne County than the State Court Administrative Office recommended in its 2003 Judicial Resources Report. Wayne County, however, has had seen its population fall in past years.

Cropsey said that while the governor cites budgetary issues in her veto message of two of the bills she says she'd consider the judgeships if more were added in Wayne County. Cropsey said his committee followed the advice of the nonpartisan Supreme Court administrative office in recommending where new judgeships would be added.

In the 2003 Judicial Resources Report, the administrative office only recommended a circuit or district court add a judgeship if at least two additional judges were needed. The report uses data such as court caseloads and other objective data to determine where judgeships should be added or removed.

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